

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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NORTON SOUND COMMERCIAL SALMON OPENINGS

There will be a number of commercial salmon openings in the Golovnin Bay and Norton Bay Subdistricts beginning Thursday, July 26. Openings are as follows:

Golovnin Bay Subdistrict

There will be one directed chum salmon opening in the Golovnin Bay Subdistrict for 36 hours from 12:00 noon Thursday, July 26 to 12:00 midnight Friday evening, July 27. This period is being permitted to allow some late season chum salmon harvest. Late run timing models show that the Niukluk River tower chum salmon escapement goal of 23,000 is projected to be achieved. Incidental coho salmon harvests from this period will also provide an early index of coho salmon run strength to Golovnin Bay Subdistrict. Permit holders are limited to set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Norton Bay Subdistrict

Norton Bay Subdistrict will reopen to commercial salmon fishing for one 48-hour period from 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 26 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 28. Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 29, Norton Bay Subdistrict will reopen to a commercial fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week until 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 10. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays. Permit holders in the Norton Bay Subdistrict are limited to set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. This schedule will provide flexibility for the buyer and fishermen and will allow commercial harvests of late run chum salmon and coho salmon. Limited fishing effort and windows between periods should provide sufficient escapement opportunities for coho salmon to reach the spawning grounds of the Ungalik River and east fork of the Koyuk River, the major producers of coho salmon in Norton Bay. Nearly 30,000 chum salmon have been enumerated at the Inglutalik River tower operated by NSEDC which should easily provide for escapement needs. Aerial surveys will also be flown next week of the Ungalik and Inglutalik Rivers which had similar levels of chum salmon abundance in 2011. These aerial surveys will also provide an early assessment of coho salmon abundance in the lower reach of the Ungalik River.